



BLM-ALASKA FRONTIERS

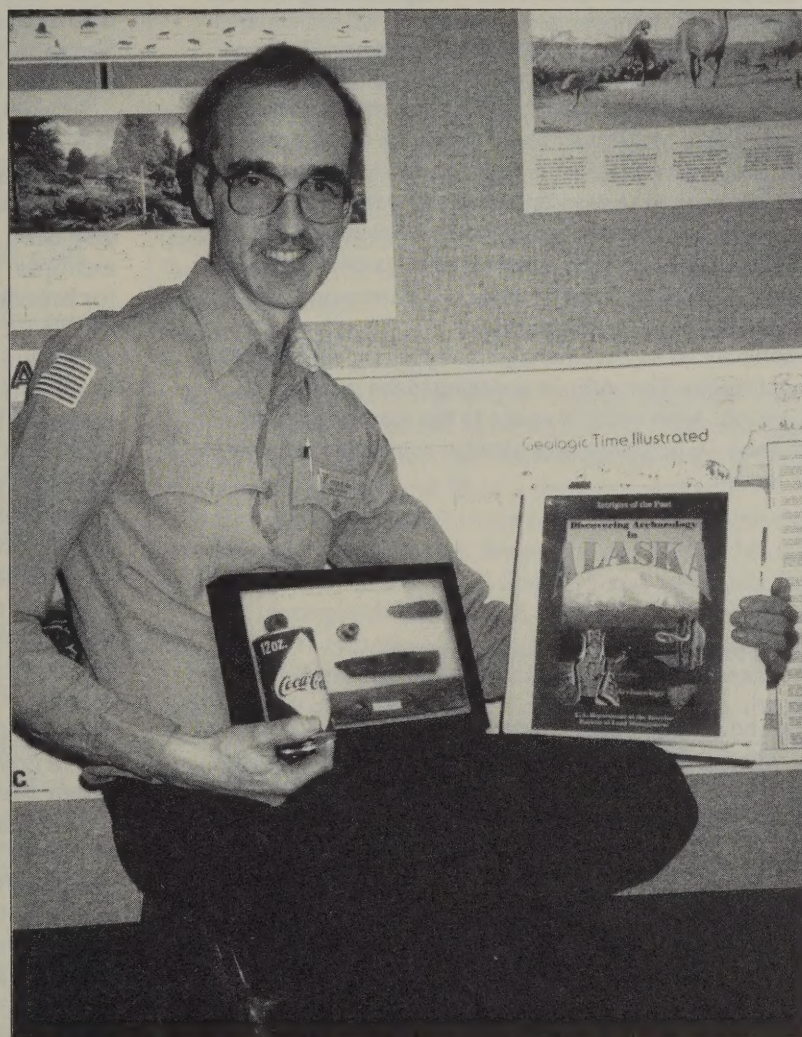
Issue 60 March/April 1997

In Alaska and elsewhere, thousands of irreplaceable one-of-a-kind sources of information about our nation's past are being carelessly or deliberately destroyed. To combat the growing problem of looting and vandalism of cultural sites on public lands, a law was passed requiring federal agencies to establish educational outreach programs.

As part of BLM's nationwide educational program, *Project Archaeology*, Robert King, state archaeologist for BLM-Alaska, co-authored a student handbook, *Intrigue of the Past: Discovering Archaeology in Alaska*. The handbook was designed to teach grades four through seven about the importance and meaning of irreplaceable cultural resources in Alaska, and to help them gain insights into prehistoric and historic cultures.

A study of the past—of earlier peoples and places long ago—will help students gain a respect for the wisdom it may contain for people today. And, ultimately, it will help protect relics of our nation's cultural heritage.

Discovering Archaeology in Alaska



Janet Malone

Dr. Robert King, state archaeologist for BLM-Alaska, holds a copy of the BLM student Alaska archaeology handbook he co-authored—*Intrigue of the Past: Discovering Archaeology in Alaska*. The handbook, developed for grades four through seven, encourages students to gain an appreciation for prehistoric and historic cultural resources in Alaska. Dr. King is also holding some artifacts found on Alaskan excavation sites, including a sample from his extensive *Coca-Cola* can collection.

BLM-Alaska meetings seek feedback on NPR-A plan

The BLM, with participants from the Minerals Management Service, the State of Alaska and the North Slope Borough, is now developing a range of management options for a 4.6-million-acre area in the northeast corner of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A). Scoping meetings were held in communities across the state to gather information about the issues and concerns that people feel should be addressed in the Integrated Activity Plan (IAP) to be written this summer. BLM planners will also use this information to develop a range of options, then analyze the impacts in an accompanying draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will be released for public comment this fall. Meetings were held in the villages of Barrow and Atkasuk, as well as in Anchorage and Fairbanks.

As BLM works on its new management plan for NPR-A, BLM-Alaska State Director Tom Allen is speaking to the public and interested groups. Allen recently spoke to the Alaska Support Industry Alliance—a non-profit organization supporting the sale of oil and gas leases.

IMPORTANT DATES IN NPR-A PLANNING SCHEDULE

1997

April 18	End of first public comment period (scoping phase)
May	Descriptions of management alternatives developed
October	Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) available
Nov-Dec	Public hearings and comment period on draft EIS

1998

June	Final EIS published
July	Final decision document released

BLM-Alaska State Director speaks to Alaska Support Industry Alliance

"Throughout this process, we're going to do everything we can to make the public comment period relatively fluent," said Allen. "We'll do that by keeping all interests informed on a regular basis. We've asked scientists, the public, and anyone else interested to attend, *especially* the residents. The Nuiqsut scoping meeting was delayed due to the death of an elder in the village. Something like that has a pretty big impact on a community, so we rescheduled the meeting."

"We need a contemporary look at the whole NPR-A. I was up there the other day, looking at this vast, white landscape. It's a good idea to take a look at what's possible there, but we also need to consider all its special values. For example, this area is one of the primary sites for breeding and molting waterfowl.

"About \$1 million is in our budget for the effort, but we're not fully funded for it. We're shifting our priorities, and we're using people that are already paid for. We'll be asking Washington to consider it during the mid-year review, but we haven't asked for a special appropriation; that's not practical right now.

"It's kind of interesting, depending on where people sit and what their experiences are, how they feel. If the EIS is done properly, I think the process will go smoothly. Minerals Management Service has a really good track record on doing EIS's, and is a major source of help. Whatever else goes on in terms of delays, we're going to do a proper job. I'm confident about that.

"The Biological Research Division, within the U.S. Geological Survey, is doing a peer review. The State of Alaska team member will provide the state's input to the EIS, and the North Slope Borough will be heavily involved. Other scientists will be reviewing the process. We expect this effort will result in a superior product.

"There is a 60-day comment period on the draft EIS. If people are kept informed all along the process should be adequate."

—Janet Malone

BLM opens Juneau Minerals Information Center

The Bureau of Land Management has renovated and renamed the former Bureau of Mines' (USBM) library in Juneau. This unique facility—now called the BLM Juneau Minerals Information Center—contains minerals information, publications and data that are not available elsewhere.

Traditionally, the library has provided Alaska-oriented minerals publications and access to the USBM mineral property files. These files contain results of investigations of Alaskan mineral deposits by the USBM over the last 50 years.

Minerals-oriented reports from both State and Federal agencies are available at the Center, along with on-line access to Federal land status information and minerals-oriented Internet sites.

The librarian and BLM geologists and mining engineers are available to assist the public with minerals questions.

Servicing 300 to 400 patrons per year, the center contains more than 15,000 government documents, including U.S. Geological Survey bulletins, professional papers, water supply papers, open-file reports and geologic maps of Alaska. Other collections include Alaska State Division of Geological and Geophysical Survey (DGGs) publications, and USBM bulletins, reports of investigations, information circulars, and open file reports.

In the past few years the center has expanded its collection of environmental oriented reports and journals on acid rock drainage, mine reclamation and submarine tailings disposal. Plans call for stocking and distributing Alaska State DGGs publications on Southeast Alaska.

The center will provide computer access to land information and several minerals databases, including the BLM's Lands Information System (LIS) and the former USBM's Minerals Availability System (MAS) database on Alaskan mineral deposits. The LIS provides current mining claim information for federal lands in Alaska. The BLM is currently making parts of the MAS database available on the Internet, and assistance will be available for searching these databases.

Inquiries for reports and information should be directed to Jane Albrecht, Librarian, Juneau Minerals Information Center (907-364-2111)

—Roger Baer

Iditarod National Historic Trail— it's more than mushing

The Iditarod National Historic Trail is Alaska's longest, most travelled gold rush trail and its only national historic trail. Although it crosses private, state, federal and Native Alaskan lands, it is administered under comprehensive, cooperative management plan developed by the Bureau of Land Management. BLM is responsible for the protection and preservation of more than 300 known historic and pre-historic sites located on or near the Trail.

Segments of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race follow the Iditarod National Historic Trail so each year the BLM issues the Iditarod Race Committee a permit allowing the race on public land. This year, Anchorage District outdoor recreation planner Jake Schlapfer and ADO ranger Randy Tracy were on hand to make sure mushers complied with permit stipulations by monitoring trail use and ensuring the integrity of the historic Rohn cabin. Traveling the trail on snowmachine and making sure litter and debris was properly removed was Norm Messenger, natural resource specialist for BLM's Nome Field Office and a member of the Iditarod "sweep crew."

At the other end of the trail, in Nome, Mike Zaidlicz, Iditarod Trail coordinator, staffed BLM's Iditarod National Historic Trail display at the Nome convention center, providing information on the trails history and BLM's management role.

The race always draws more attention to the historic trail and ever increasing interest by the public has had BLM call for the development of interpretive displays and materials. Gene Ervine, ASO interpretive specialist, will work with Zaidlicz on these interpretative efforts.

Many of these interpretive displays will be created from materials already acquired by BLM. In the mid-1980s, the BLM conducted oral interviews with old-timers living along the Trail. A more recent oral history project and building survey was done under a cooperative agreement with the State of Alaska's Office of History and Archaeology on the town of Flat. The building survey and the oral histories are being published as BLM technical reports.

BLM has recently assisted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in establishing an historic archaeology field school with the University of Alaska Fairbanks at the abandoned village of Dishket. This former Athabaskan village, located on the Innoko National Wildlife Refuge, was a hub for several gold rush communities at the turn of the century.

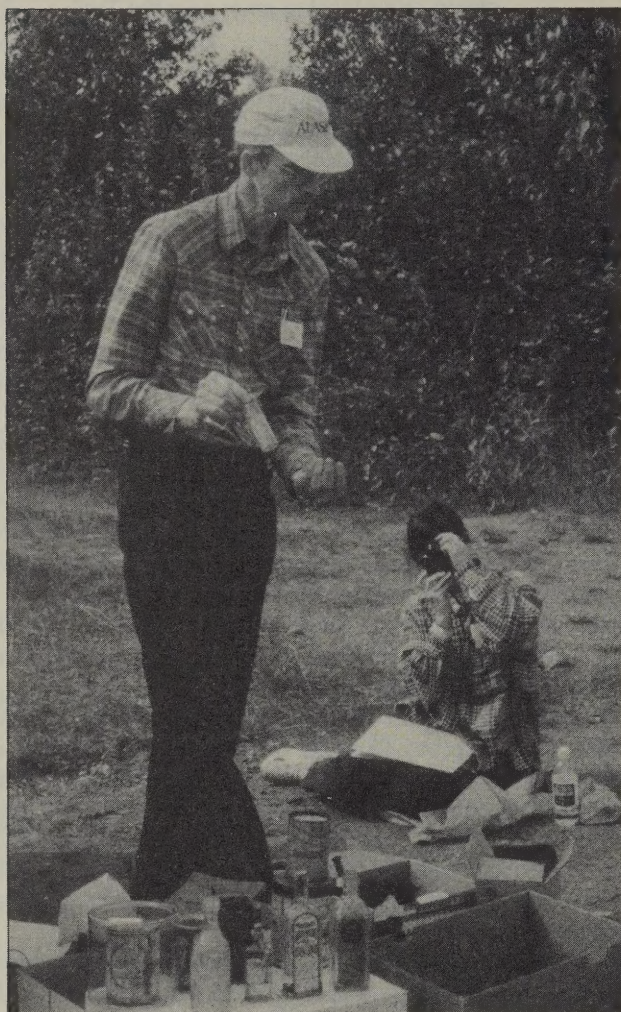
Future activities to be pursued along the Iditarod Trail include the recording of National Register nominations and the cataloguing of historic Iditarod Trail photograph collections.

—Danielle Allen

—contributors Donna Redding/Mike Zaidlicz

Discovering Archaeology in Alaska

Using time travel and fictional adventures, a new archaeology student handbook promises to be an excellent teaching tool



Last August, 25 teachers from around the state were brought together to learn how to use national BLM *Project Archaeology* education materials. Robert King, BLM-Alaska state archaeologist, explains principles to teachers on how to instruct their students about the significance of Alaska's past and the need to help preserve it.

Often people think the past is not interesting or has little relevance to their daily lives. Robert King, state archaeologist for the Bureau of Land Management-Alaska, sees this as both an educational opportunity, and a contributor to a serious problem: cultural sites both on and off public lands are increasingly being destroyed by looting and vandalism.

"People who loot or destroy archaeological sites—both historic and prehistoric—rob us all from ever knowing the real story of our nation's past," says King. "In Alaska, as elsewhere, sites are being destroyed, and with them, knowledge about the past and the lessons it can teach us are gone forever."

To help combat looting of prehistoric and historic sites, changes in federal law required all federal agencies to establish educational outreach programs. The BLM's nationwide program, *Project Archaeology*, was developed to teach the youth of America about the importance and meaning of irreplaceable cultural resources of America so that, hopefully, vandalism would decrease. Further development of Alaska-specific materials produced an Alaska handbook, *Intrigue of the Past: Discovering Archaeology in Alaska*, as a supplement to the national materials developed in the earlier 1990s.

King, who co-authored the student handbook, says the Alaska narrative involves a tale of discovery and time-travel by children who eye-witness the past. The fictional situations, characters and events are closely based on actual historical and prehistoric information.

"Our experience has been that teachers are quite anxious and excited to use this material as a way to enrich their teaching of other subject matter, as well as when teaching about history, prehistory and Native culture," says King. The richly-illustrated handbook is written for fourth through seventh graders. This experimental approach to learning presents the subject matter in a memorable way that teaches, and at the same time entertains.

Besides the handbook and accompanying lesson plans, a resource directory lists places to visit, books, videos and other resource materials about



Dan Gullickson

BLM's 1996 *Project Archaeology* workshop for teachers included a field trip to the Crow Creek Mine, a gold rush tourist attraction east of Anchorage, near Girdwood.

Alaska's past. Alaska archaeologists who may be able to further help in educational efforts are also noted. The authors also included information on the environment, fisheries, wildlife and local culture, as well as insights and understanding of some of the state's Native cultures.

The elements of the Raven and obsidian stone are used to transport the children back in time. Raven was selected because of its widespread importance to many Alaskan and Lower 48 Native cultures. Obsidian stone is used because obsidian was traded throughout much of Alaska, for more than 10,000 years in some areas; it was important for making knives, tools and other implements.

The information in Alaska's handbook came from a variety of written records and experts throughout the state. The handbook was submitted to a number of teachers both in and outside Alaska for review and comment, and the final edit was done by BLM's national *Project Archaeology* team in Dolores, Colorado.

The handbook also includes information about the BLM to help children better understand the federal agency and its role in managing more than 70 million acres of public lands in Alaska. Those lands cover more than one-fifth of the state—greater than three times the size of Indiana. BLM manages approximately one-eighth of the United States or 270 million acres of public lands, primarily located in 11 western states; there are an estimated five million cultural sites on those lands. To date, only 9.9 million acres (15,468 square miles) have been surveyed for cultural sites, equal to a 5.5-mile wide swath stretching

from Washington, D.C. to San Francisco.

Washington, D.C.-based BLM archaeologist John Douglas calculates that it would take 150 archaeologists 150 years to survey and record all the sites on BLM lands. Since the agency can't afford to hire all those people, they must depend on the public, especially teachers and future generations that they teach, to help preserve and protect the Nation's past. Cultural sites on public lands are being vandalized at an alarming rate and a committed public can help control the looting.

King says he's happy that *Project Archaeology* is expanding into a state-wide effort that involves not only BLM and its sister federal agencies, but also the State of Alaska, Native corporations, and other groups, teachers, and private citizens. "*Project Archaeology* was launched during a statewide meeting last year in Anchorage. It was organized by the BLM and the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office. The effort is coordinated statewide by the Office of History and Archaeology, but BLM remains a prime participant."

The BLM's *Project Archaeology* program plans to evaluate this fictionalized, narrative form of teaching about archaeology, history, and Alaska's heritage. Teachers who use the book in Alaska's classrooms will play a key role in the evaluation process.

To learn more, contact Robert King, State Archaeologist for BLM-Alaska, at: (907) 271-5510, or on the Internet at: r2king@ak.blm.gov.

—Janet Malone

BLM's Nome Creek project offers new recreation area

"... we hope to build interpretive displays on gold-panning, catch-and-release fishing, wildlife, and different geologic and natural features."

Randy Goodwin,
outdoor rec. planner

The Bureau of Land Management's White Mountains Gateway Project is bringing a major new summer recreation program to Nome Creek in the White Mountains National Recreation Area (NRA). Campgrounds are being built at each end of a new road paralleling Nome Creek and are due to be completed this summer. BLM expects to open the facilities to the public in the summer of 1998.

With more than 200 miles of winter trails and nine public use cabins, the one-million-acre White Mountains NRA has long been a destination for winter recreation users. Randy Goodwin, outdoor recreation planner for BLM's Northern District, says Nome Creek is the first major recreation area BLM has developed for summer users. The Mt. Prindle Campground at the upstream end of the road will have 13 campsites. The Ophir Creek Campground located downstream will have 19 sites. Designed with restrooms and water facilities, new trailheads will connect to existing and planned hiking and all-terrain vehicle trails. The campgrounds will provide access to the upper Nome Creek area and the lower Nome Creek for floaters entering Beaver Creek.

Goodwin says about a half dozen trailheads will be located along the road, and a three-mile hiking loop to Table Top Mountain will be constructed along with 15 to 20 miles of new hiking trails. A 36-foot bridge also was built across Nome Creek.

Gold dredge mining operations from the 1930s to the 1960s disturbed about eight miles of Nome Creek," says Roger Evans, BLM civil engineer for the project. Evans says the removal of tailings from former mining operations will allow at least two miles of the creek to be restored to a more natural streambed and reclaimed for fish habitat.

The contractor, Kiewit Pacific, cleared the ground, and excavated and hauled 400,000 tons of tailings for the base of the 16-mile-long road. The \$5 million contract called for the contractor to allow a full year of freezing and thawing for subsidence to occur before the road is completed. The road will then be surfaced with 80,000 tons of crushed tailing material.

"In the future we hope to build interpretative displays on goldpanning, catch-and-release fishing, wildlife, and different geologic and natural features," Goodwin says.

—Andy Williams

Couple studies grayling, salmon for BLM projects

Fisheries research is a family affair for Ingrid Kacher and Nate Collin of the BLM Northern District. Kacher, a fisheries biologist, and Collin, a fisheries biological technician, met and married after they both went to work for the BLM in Fairbanks in 1992. Now they run research projects 112 miles apart on Nome Creek and Beaver Creek in the White Mountains National Recreation Area.

The projects are linked to construction of a road and recreational facilities at Nome Creek, as well as to previous placer mining activity and subsequent stream restoration.

"We expect to establish baseline information about Arctic grayling and salmon in the Beaver Creek watershed so that any effects on the populations from increased recreational use can be measured," says Kacher.

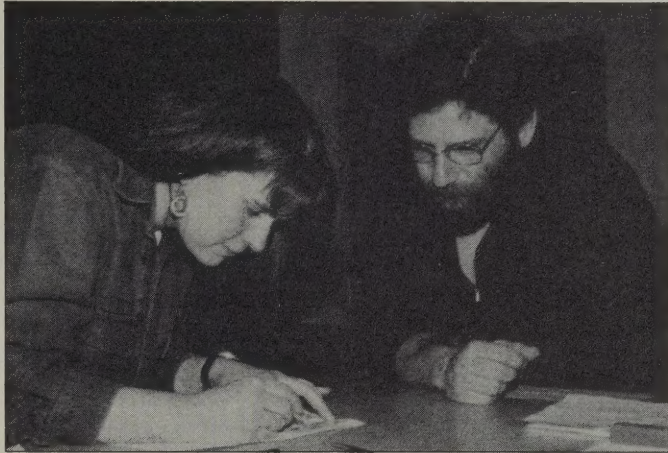
For three weeks last summer Kacher and several other BLM employees and volunteers sampled Arctic grayling at sites along an 11-mile stretch of Nome Creek where the road is being built between Moose Creek and Ophir Creek. Captured fish were weighed to the nearest gram, their length measured and age determined.

Kacher says catching the fish with a hook and line is not as fun as it sounds. "You're fishing 10 to 12 hours a day, and then you have to weigh them, measure them, take their scales, tag them, and nurse the fish if it's stressed or wounded. It's hard on your back."

Kacher says she found three times as many Arctic grayling 10 inches or longer than were found in a previous count in 1992. The State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game has designated Nome Creek Arctic grayling a catch and release fishery since 1994.

Minnow traps set to catch Arctic grayling fingerlings turned up empty. Kacher says the previous winter's lack of snow and the cold temperatures may have taken a severe toll on juvenile grayling by causing the creek to freeze solid in overwintering areas inhabited by young fish. "The riparian zone of the creek is intact in the area we sampled," says Kacher. "We found that it provides good habitat and that the populations of Arctic grayling in undisturbed sections of Nome Creek are healthy." Upstream from the sampled area, Nome Creek runs through tailings left from former gold dredging operations.

Meanwhile, Collin began what he expects to be at least a five-year project on salmon enumeration in the Beaver Creek National Wild River to establish baseline information about Arctic grayling and salmon in the Beaver Creek



Dan Gullickson

Ingrid Kacher and Nate Collin of the BLM Northern District mount scales from Arctic grayling caught in Nome Creek, on an acetate slide. The slide was pressed and the impression studied under a microfiche to determine the age of the fish.

watershed. Working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife biologist David Wiswar, Collin selected a research site about 110 miles downstream from the mouth of Nome Creek. The information will be used to help measure any effects on the populations from increased recreational use.

The 236-foot-long floating weir, constructed of 50 four-by-ten foot PVC (polyvinyl chloride) panels, blocked the salmon, which had swam 800 miles up the Yukon River and 200 miles up Beaver Creek. The weir funneled them to a trap where Collin counted, weighed and measured them, and took scales for age determination and genetic analysis. "Our goal is to sample a minimum of 100 fish from each run to determine their unique genetic makeup," says Collin. "That information is given to Fish and Game so they can determine from their fish wheels on the Yukon which salmon are from Beaver Creek."

The two researchers said their studies are important to ensure the populations of salmon and Arctic grayling remain healthy in Beaver Creek and Nome Creek. Kacher says Arctic grayling have been documented migrating from Beaver Creek to Nome Creek in the spring to spawn and feed, but it is possible that Nome Creek supports a year-round Arctic grayling fishery that is genetically distinct from the Beaver Creek fishery. Collin adds that the salmon in Beaver Creek are also distinct.

"Small populations are important to the overall genetic diversity, and if the run is small the fish are more sensitive to overharvest and environmental factors that influence stock productivity."

—Andy Williams

The Bureau of Land Management is calling for nominations for its state-wide Alaska Resource Advisory Council (RAC). The council advises and makes recommendations to BLM on resource and land management issues for nearly 90 million acres of public lands in Alaska.

The RAC includes a cross section of Alaskans from around the state representing economic and recreation interests; conservation/environmental, archaeological and historic interests; and elected officials, Alaska Native organizations and the general public. Council members serve without monetary compensation, but are reimbursed for travel and meal expenses. Members serve terms ranging from one to three years.

Nomination packets are available from BLM offices in Anchorage (907-271-5555) and Fairbanks (907-474-2200). Individuals may nominate themselves or others. All nominations must be accompanied by letters of reference from the interests or organizations to be represented.

Nominees should have appropriate knowledge of an array of resource, social and economic issues affecting management of public land, and a demonstrated commitment to collaboration in

seeking solutions to these issues. All nominees must be Alaska residents.

Nominations will be accepted until May 8, 1997. Final selection and appointments to the Alaska Resource Advisory Council will be made by the Secretary of the Interior.



To ensure better reclamation of public lands damaged by hardrock mining activities, the BLM has published a final rule requiring hardrock mining operators on BLM lands to be bonded for the full amount of their projected reclamation costs. Hardrock minerals include gold, silver, copper, and diamonds.

Under the rule, published in the February 28, 1997 Federal Register, all parties engaging in hardrock mining or exploration on BLM-managed lands must maintain bonds or financial guarantees showing that they can cover the full cost of restoring land that has been disturbed by their activities.

The rule does not apply to "casual" hardrock activities, such as rockhounding and geologic mapping. Under the BLM's old policy, the agency required

the bonding of only plan-level operators whose mining-related activities disturbed more than five acres of public land. BLM did not require bonds for notice-level operators whose activities disturb five acres or less. The new rule requires all mining and exploration operators, regardless of how much acreage will be affected, to maintain bonds or financial guarantees that cover the entire amount of projected reclamation costs.



An airborne geophysical survey of the Stikine Area northwest of Wrangell is being undertaken this spring. This survey is being jointly funded by the Bureau of Land Management, the City of Wrangell and the Alaska State Division of Geological and Geophysical Survey. Results of the 1997 airborne geophysical survey will be available for review this fall. Copies of all geophysical maps, CD-ROMs and diskettes generated by the survey will be available to the public at the BLM's Juneau Minerals Information Center in the fall.

Editor: Janet S. Malone

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BLM-AK-GI-94-005-1120-912